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Influence of Nollywood films on the cultural values of Nigerians in the diaspora

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Abstract

Culture has a crucial role in the evolution of civilization. Nations and societies throughout the world are always seeking for methods to protect the cultural worth of their societies for future generations. Daily fundamental cultural values change, yet it is crucial for the nation to protect the original culture from mutilation. The work examines whether Nollywood films are promoting or distorting indigenous cultural values in Nigeria, whether the themes of Nollywood movies portray Native cultural values in Nigeria accurately or not, and the potential contribution of Nollywood to the advancement of Nigeria's development objectives through the promotion of indigenous cultural values in Nigeria. The study is based on ideas of cultivation and cultural norms. This became apparent as Nollywood video viewers skyrocketed, spurring rivalry among movie makers who were willing to pay a premium for plots that would make people care and boost sales. The article suggests that the Nigerian Films Censors' Commission examine movies before releasing them to a wider public and that screenwriters always keep Nigerian cultural heritage at the forefront of their minds.

Keywords: Africa, countries, developed, global, ICT, internet, Nigeria, village

Introduction

Culture generally is said to be the way of life of any given people; it defines the way they greet, the way they socialize, the food they eat, their dressing patterns, how they show courtesy – greetings, family structure and interrelationship between families, marital rites, burial rites and their relationship with the outside world. Culture is beautiful and adds colour to the world, as we know it.

Graham (2014) ^[11] identifies then that, "culture is not a luxury for elites, it is a vital component of any society's progress, and the international development community must not ignore it". Nollywood videos offer a means through which African cultures may be observed, examined, and admired or studied, which is in keeping with the research's goal.

According to Ozele (2010) ^[12], "Film has done more to make reality malleable in a postmodern culture with its wide accessibility, sense-and-psyche altering structure, and its easy ability for persuasion.

Nigerian entertainment industry, leveraging on the notion that it is easier to teach people through enticing pictures than through captivating words, has been driving a cultural shift throughout Sub-Saharan Africa away from textual and historical truths and toward visual imagery. From a historical standpoint, Kenneth Nnebue's living in Bondage, which had a great amount of success, might be credited as the real beginning of Nollywood. According to Okoroji (2006: 1) ^[12] The success of what would have been thought of as an experimental endeavor by an entrepreneurial Nigerian businessman named Kenneth Nnebue can be traced as the real beginning of the Nigerian film industry, which is now known as Nollywood. The VHS-marketed Igbo-language film living in Bondage, directed by Kenneth Nnebue, was a hot akara. The universal conflicts of love, money, greed, and criminality were shown in Living in Bondage in a narrative that everyone could identify with. Kenneth Nnebue followed up Living in Bondage with other films like Glamour Girls, demonstrating that a business could be developed around the distribution of Nollywood videos in the VHS format. After Living in Bondage became successful, the majority of serious TV drama makers in Nigeria rapidly followed Mr. Nnebue's lead and began producing feature films that were sold on the VHS format, creating a new business. Some would argue that Living in Bondage was successful because VCRs were common household items in Nigeria. Others would assert that the massive increase in VCR sales in Nigeria was mostly caused by Living

in Bondage since everyone wanted the technology to see the show. Nigerians are subjected to a broad range of media, which has influenced how their minds work, how they perceive the world, how they should behave, and other factors. Our culture, which has been described as the entire civilization and is an essential component of any society, represents the entirety of an individual group of people dealing with their past, present, and projected insight into their immediate and distant future, and has thus been distorted and tainted by interference of Western values and beliefs. Due to cultural imperialism that infiltrated the nation through communication tools like radio, cinema, etc., the Nigerian culture has endured immense harm over the past few years. The Nigerian people are now compelled to adopt Western culture as a result. This research shows the significance of the medium as a tool for the preservation of the Nigerian culture through its film house Nollywood since culture is an intrinsic component of the society and cannot be forgone (Danbello and Dakogol, 2015) ^[3]

Statement of problem

This study examines the subject of African films and its intended or actual effects on cultural development. A change from the traditional culture to the Western culture appears to be taking place, especially in metropolitan regions and cities, as a result of the expanding impact of Western media and the idea of globalization.

This study examines whether Nigerian indigenous cultural norms are being promoted by Nollywood films or if they are being distorted by them. It also examines whether the themes of Nollywood movies accurately depict Nigerian indigenous cultural values, as well as the potential role Nollywood may play in advancing Nigeria's development goals.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the relevance of Nollywood film content to the promotion of Nigeria's culture amongst Nigerians in diaspora.
2. To identify the challenges experienced in the promotion of Nigeria's culture using Nollywood movies amongst Nigerians in diaspora.
3. To ascertain the benefits of Nollywood films in terms of promoting Nigeria's cultural development amongst Nigerians in diaspora.
4. To evaluate the role of Nollywood films in promoting Nigerian indigenous cultural values?

Research Questions

1. How relevant is the Nollywood films content to the promotion of Nigeria's culture films?
2. What are the challenges experienced in the promotion of Nigeria's culture using Nollywood movies films?
3. What are the numerous benefits of Nollywood movies in terms of promoting Nigeria's cultural development films?
4. What are the roles Nollywood movies possibly play in promoting Nigerian indigenous cultural values films?

Literature review

Nigeria People and Culture

Culture has existed from the dawn of humanity and may be traced back to that time. It might be interpreted as a people's way of life, the basis for their existence, etc. Culture is

defined by the Penguin English Dictionary as a "improvement of mental capabilities, refined taste or judgements, High scholars, and aesthetic growth of a group characterized by a specific level of material achievement" (Opubor, A.E. *et al.* 1979:31) ^[6]. A people's culture is the manner of life they have created for themselves. It incorporates all aspects of their social development, including their art, science, and religion and ceremonial systems. Society should not just be understood in terms of the arts, such as music, dance, and drama. It is the mingling of a nation's aesthetic elements with its people's science and religion, laws and moral standards, wisdom from the past, and education for the present situation. Culture is defined as "a large machinery, partly material, partly human, and partly spiritual, through which civilizations are formed into permanent and recognized groupings" by Opubor A.E. *et al.* (1979:31) ^[6].

Culture is a way of life of a people, their identity and life wire. It has gone beyond idol worshiping since whenever its concept is discussed what readily comes to the mind of an average African is 'the picture of his fore bears dancing around giant trees in sacrificial worship or otherwise the picture of a Sango man casting spells and mouthing incantations in the process of some unholy ritual'.

Film and Cultural development

Even while debates rage about the contribution that home videos have made to Nigeria's cultural landscape, it is important to remember that this contribution is continuously being made. With more than two decades of growth, the Nigerian film industry should be expected to do more to promote culture. Although certain elements are changing the characteristics of what can be considered the nation's culture, the film industry is going through a major shift from analog to digital.

Mgbejume (1989) ^[11] asserts that even in colonial times, people understood the enormous potential of cinema. Prior to today, the Federal Communication machinery recognized cinema as the best internal and external PR medium.

The market has been dominated by movies in China, India, Hong Kong, England, and America before a few local filmmakers mostly in late 1970s took up the task to fill the gap in local involvement in the film industry.

It was clear from the sheer volume of Chinese and Indian movies that took over our televisions. The diversity of Anglo-American movies comprised, among others, cowboy, horror, war, and adventure movies.

These movies faced stiff competition from the Nigerian audience's rising interest in Indian love and Kung Fu movies. The Anglo-American film distributors, however, used mobile theatre units to routinely exhibit their movies for free around the nation in addition to having the benefit of the English language. The promoters of Chinese and Indian cinema inexplicably limited their activity to town theatres. These producers, who are still driven by the financial motive, seem to be fixated with popular culture projection. The push to meet screenplay, character development, and production standards established in Western commercial norms is also influenced by the packaging of films for export. (Danbello and Dakogol, 2015) ^[3].

How the film industry reacts to the problem of being lucrative while sacrificing the rich cultural legacy of our nation Nigeria and the unity that unites us will determine the

long-term impact of video films on Nigerian society. There is no gain saying that Nollywood videos possess the ability to transmit Nigeria's cultural identity.

Film and cultural awareness

No doubt home video messages are based on a particular way of life. It helps to portray certain societal happenings within a given or series of communities with the intent of making meanings and impression on people's life. Danbello and Dakogol (2015) [3] states that: The film medium appears to have the most universal appeal and impact when compared to other media. When properly harnessed, the film can rise above limitation of language and language barriers by utilizing its creative powers of visuals and audio effects to create a community among an audience of various backgrounds. Film is the most powerful media for fostering cultural awareness. Films tell stories of past event, present event and future event.

Theoretical Framework

Cultivation theory

George Gerbner presented this hypothesis in the 1960s as a component of cultural indicators. The cultivation hypothesis was introduced by Nabi and Riddle in 2008 and is described as "a communication and sociological paradigm which claims that long-term exposure to television influences how well the consumers of media view the world as well as behave themselves in life." The focus of a cultivation analysis is on the common and long-lasting effects of growing up and living alongside television. Reality television programs may have broader influence on viewers' lifestyles than some other television programs since they are non-fictional.

The long-term ramifications of television are investigated under this hypothesis. The main tenet of the cultivation hypothesis is that individuals are more inclined to accept the social reality depicted on television the longer they spend "living" in the world of television. Under this heading, popular television media's ideological statements and depictions of the world have a significant impact on how people see it.

Uses and Gratification Theory

According to the theory of Uses and Gratification, individuals utilize the media to fulfill their needs and desires. According to Wimmer and Dominick (1994) [13], the interest in viewers and the reasons they exhibited particular media behaviors led to the creation of uses and gratifications.

The Gratifications theory (UGT), created by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, was designed to better understand how and why individuals used media for their own gratification. According to the Uses and Gratification hypothesis, people actively choose or utilize a particular medium to meet their unique requirements, with little or no influence from the medium on their decision-making. People select the media they wish to utilize, and they view it as a means of satisfying their wants.

Methodology

The research design for this study is a survey research approach was conducted through the tweeter and email account of most of them. The study's population is the

Nigerian Diasporas, particularly that in Europe. The Foreign ministry estimates that there are seventeen million Nigerians living overseas, mostly adults over the age of 18. The Nigerians Diaspora Organisation Europe estimate that about 461,695 Nigerians resides in Europe as at 2019. The sample size for this study has been worked out and is 400 for easy access.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of responses on whether the Nigeria Hollywood videos share any relevance with Nigeria's culture

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	236	60
No	112	28.5
Partially	45	11.5
Can't say	-	-
Total	393	100

Under table 1, 236 (60%) of the sampled respondents indicated that the Nigerian Home video share some relevance with the Nigerian culture while 112 (28.5%) of the respondents are of the opposing view as they do not see the relevance of Nigerian movies to Nigeria's culture and this makes 1/8th of the totals sampled population, relevant enough to be considered. Forty-five respondents however stated that they see some relevance of Nigerian Home Video to Nigerian culture.

Table 2: Distribution of responses on whether Nigeria's Nollywood videos content help to promote Nigeria's culture

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	51	13
Agree	73	19
	127	32
Disagree	128	33
Strongly disagree	14	4
Total	393	100

Under table 2, 127 (32%) of the respondents are of the view that Nigerian Home video partially helps to promote Nigeria's culture; while a slightly higher percentage which makes the highest in this category believe that Nollywood videos do not necessarily promote Nigerian culture. 19% making 73 respondents believe that Nigerian Home video helps to promote Nigeria's culture as another 51 (13%) respondents even supports this view further and more strongly. Finally and on the contrary, 14 respondents, representing 4% of the sample size feel strongly that Nigerian Home video do not promote her culture.

Under table 3, a little above a quarter of the respondents identified that Nigerian Home Video holds several benefits with regards to the Nigerian culture by way of encouraging the development of the culture through its content; and this accounts for 105 (27%) of the respondents. 59 (15%) see Nigerian movies as encouraging the learning of local languages, 55 (14%) see it as helping to keep Nigerian abreast with their cultural values, 52 (13%) each see it as not only helping to preserve the culture but to expose the negative practices in the Nigerian cultural experience. However, 18% which is 70 respondents do not see any real value of Nigerian Home Video to the promotion of Nigeria's culture.

Table 3: Distribution of responses of what the benefits of Nigerian Home Video to development of culture is

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
It encourages the learning of the local language	59	15
It helps to remind Nigerians of cultural values	55	14
it exposes the negative practices for correction	52	13
It helps preserve our cultural heritage	52	13
It has no real value to culture	70	18
All of the above	105	27
None of the above	-	-
Can't say	-	-
Total	393	100

Table 4: Distribution of responses on whether Nigerian Home Video promotes Nigerian cultures better than western cultural influence on Nigerians

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	44	11
Agree	77	20
In partial agreement	75	19
Disagree	106	27
Strongly disagree	91	23
Total	393	100

Under table 4, a total of 106 (27%) respondents are of the view that the Nigerian Home Video is not doing a better job of promoting Nigeria's culture better than western influence on Nigerians and this view was strongly supported by another 91 (23%) of the respondents making well over 50% of the entire sampled population.

However, 75 (19%) respondents thinks that Nigerian Home video partially has a better cultural influence than western influence on Nigerians while 77 (20%) respondents do not agree that western influence on Nigerians is stronger than Nigerian Home video's cultural promotion message; 44 respondents, representing 11% also strongly agreed with this point of view.

Table 5: Distribution on respondents view on what the perceived limitations to better cultural content for Nigerian movies are

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of professionalism	74	19
Lack of value for Nigerian Culture	75	19
Lack of finance	65	17
The effect of piracy on movie producers	77	20
All of the above	72	18
None of the above	-	-
Can't say	-	-
Total	393	100

From the perspective of the respondents, some of the issues identified as likely challenges facing the promotion of culture through Nigerian Nollywood videos as identified by respondents; 74 respondents, representing 19% of the sampled population states that the lack of professionalism is one of the banes of the Nigerian Movie industry and affecting their cultural content 75 respondents, representing 19% of the population believe that the lack of value or appreciation for Nigeria's culture is one of the reasons not much of local content exist in Nigerian movies. Lack of finance to aid production is believed to influence the content of Nigerian movies as indicated by 65 (17%) respondents while 77 (20%) respondents see piracy as affecting the movie producers and influence their decision on what to produce. A total 72 respondents, representing 18% of the

respondents believe that all the above mentioned points are likely limitations to good cultural content in Nigerian movie.

Table 6: Distribution of responses on whether proper regulation and funding from both government agencies and the private sector can help address the challenges facing Home Video cultural content

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	151	38
Agree	121	31
In partial agreement	67	17
Disagree	54	14
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	393	100

Under table 6, a critical look at the table show that majority of the respondents are convinced that government interventions as well as private sector interventions in movie production by way of funding and proper regulation can help stem the tide of poor local content centred on the Nigerian culture. 151 respondents, representing 38% of the population are convinced that this move can yield better result in terms of rich cultural content; another 121 (31%) respondents agree with this view while 67 (17%) respondents are in partial agreements with the view. However, only 54 respondents, which is 14% of the total sampled population disagree that the way to go is through government and private sector interventions.

Table 7: Distribution of responses on how Nigerian Nollywood videos can help to promote culture

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Focus more on positive things relating to Culture	201	51
Promote more local content than foreign	101	26
Using Nigerian culture in movies in an appealing format	47	12
All of the above	44	11
None of the above	-	-
Total	393	100

Table 7 shows that the respondents believe that much can still be done to promote culture using Nollywood videos. Fifty-five percent, which is 201 respondents and making more than half the total sampled population admonish that the Nigerian movie producer need to focus more on positive issues that can help promote Nigerian culture. Twenty-six percent, representing 101 of the respondents believe that the promotion of more local content rather than foreign concept by Nigerian movie producers can help in preserving culture while 47 (12%) respondents see the need to use Nigerian culture in an appealing manner to increase interest and

promote learning. Forty- Four respondents, representing 11% believe that all the above measures can help promote culture through Nigerian movies.

Discussion

Research Question One: How relevant is the African movie content to the promotion of Nigeria's culture?

From the responses provided it is very clear that respondents are of the view that there are some levels of relevance between Home Video content and culture, however there are divergent views as to whether or not this role is being played properly by the media.

These views are expressed in table 1 and 2 clearly where under table 1, 60% think that there is a relevance in Home video content to the promotion of culture and 40% partially agree to this view. A clear divergent view is created under table 2 where 37% (strongly agree 11/12% and agree 23/25%) of the total sampled population think that the Nigerian Home Video actually helps to promote culture but in sharp contrast 34% rejects this view clearly that Nigerian Home Video helps to promote Nigerian culture.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges experienced in the promotion of Nigeria's culture using African movies?

It is obvious that there is a problem and the solution as explained by the respondents can be found basically in table 5. Under table 5, respondents believe that there is a need for professionalism by producers and directors. Twenty-six percent of the respondents believed that professionalism would help improve the course of cultural development through movie content.

The lack of value for the Nigerian culture is seen as one of the challenges confronting the movie industry and the respondents, making 27% believes that if movie makers place more value on cultural development then there would be better aggregate of the Nigerian culture. Financial constraints is seen as what might be hindering good quality productions with better cultural content in Nigerian Nollywood videos. Piracy is also seen as what might be scaring stakeholders from putting so much in movie production and this invariably would affect what the productions would look like. Last the needed regulations by government agencies and other regulatory bodies are seen as a means to encourage better local cultural content.

Research Question Three: What are the numerous benefits of African movies in terms of promoting Nigeria's cultural development?

Table 4 already shows that more respondents believe that the Nigerian Home video does not help to promote the Nigerian culture better than the western influence on even the content of Nigerian Nollywood videos themselves. This was the view of 62% of the sampled population. However, the respondents suggested that if Nigerian Nollywood videos as used for cultural development the outcome would be:

- Encourage learning of Nigeria's diverse culture through movie content.
- That Nollywood videos can help reinforce Nigeria's cultural values.
- That with good content and storyline, Nigerian Home Video can help expose certain negative practices that are considered inimical to the various cultures.

- Nigerian Nollywood videos can help in preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage.

Research Question Four: What role could African movies possibly play in promoting Nigerian indigenous cultural values and thus advance Nigeria's developmental agenda?

The Nigerian movie can help in achieving the following functions through its movie content as identified under table 7:

- Encourage speaking and practices of the Nigerian culture.
- Be used as a springboard to correct certain unwholesome practices in the culture.
- It could be used as an advocacy vehicle to correct certain wrong traditional practices and offer better methods for practice

Conclusion

We may infer from the preceding that Nigerian films began well by highlighting our rich cultural history but eventually veered off course to accommodate financial benefits. This became apparent as Nollywood video viewers skyrocketed, spurring rivalry among movie makers who were willing to pay a premium for plots that would make people care and boost sales.

The type of messages conveyed in films may be utilized as a mass communication tool to foster unity and showcase our cultural heritage. Nigerian films have generally been seen across the world, making them an ideal vehicle for displaying our rich cultural history. Through the repackaging of movies or videos that Nigerians watch at home and abroad, our nation's cohesiveness may be strengthened.

Recommendations

Following the general direction of the Nigerian film industry, we thus suggest the following:

1. Before releasing a film for public screening, the Nigerian Film Censors Commission shall examine it.
2. When composing any story, screenwriters should always keep the rich cultural legacy of Nigeria in the forefront of their minds.
3. From this point forward, community leaders should be engaged to get real plots that would depict their culture.

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